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Abstract

Adult education in rural areas in Australia provides a contrast both in its general mood and intentions and in its organization with that in the United States. Particularly in rural areas, there seems to be less of the compulsion to organize groups (there are usually no school boards, no chambers of commerce, no women's clubs, no youth centers) than in the American situation. It is also generally true that there are no central facilities (school auditorium or gymnasium, public library, or church hall) for activities. But interaction tends to occur more informally: on the playing field, or in book discussion groups meeting in homes. Summer schools, non-credit residential programs on university campuses, usually about one week in length, are growing rapidly. Traveling lectures and cultural programs are available. There are a number of organizations, such as the Country Women's Association, which have programs which should be considered adult education; increased communication between these organizations and the state adult education agencies would be most useful. (mf)

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RURAL ADULT EDUCATION

IN

AUSTRALIA

by

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I. INTRODUCTION

This brief paper makes no attempt to review or evaluate the rich, varied and often confusing activities that comprise adult education in contemporary Australia. It does not even describe systematically the official agencies connoted by the title "Adult Education" in the Australian mind, a connotation administratively limited as compared with that held in America today. Save to mention that there is an expanding system of evening schools, technical, vocational and professional colleges and junior colleges catering for post-school youth and mature adults in cities and regional towns; and that all Australian universities teach by day and night without the administratively separate evening college typical of some parts of America, formal credit education for adults is not noticed. Rather it is concerned with certain phases of, or specific programs in the Australian adult education scene that seemed to me to have bearing on American problems, especially in relation to rural dwellers in the more isolated parts of the nation, and with some fundamental differences in American and Australian thinking that cannot be lightly dismissed. It should be remembered that Australia is also the New World; neither legally nor culturally colonial nor dependent, varied in its internal economy, experimental in legislation, increasingly polyglot in population, universally literate, sophisticated and urban in outlook despite its vast agricultural enterprises.

It is hoped that this paper may also contribute in a small way to the better use in each country of the ideas and visiting personnel of the other. Because of minor differences in philosophy, radical differences in administrative structure, Australian and American adult educators do not always know where to look, what to look at, in their respective movements. A story may illustrate. At tea on R.M.S. Oronsay I fell into conversation with a

teacher from Los Angeles en route to an exchange position in Sydney, a city he had liked during the war. On the topic of adult educational opportunity he was contemptuous: "I think those people get a raw deal. I visited several high schools in the war. They don't have anything, not anything, like we have for adults in the L. A. schools." This is true as stated. But the residents of Sydney have everything the residents of Los Angeles have, much of it from a variety of public agencies but only a small part of it from the state schools. The American did not know where to look. On arrival in a great southern city, I visited the Director of Adult Education, a personal friend of many years, and found him watching the rehearsal of a play about to tour a rural circuit. "I believe the Ford Foundation is interested in some of the things you plan to look at," he said. "We hear a lot about the Foundation. But -- where is its program? What do they teach?" The Australian did not know what to look at. The Fund for Adult Education as an organization concerned with helping develop the programs of other organizations, and with disseminating the skills and attitudes that are the educative process rather than doing its own teaching, was a strange idea. Adult education as instruction in a process is novel to many Australians, something they would not see.

Certain aspects of the Australian scene must be considered if one is to understand the relationship of adult education in rural communities to public and private agencies centralized in great coastal cities. The East coast of Australia, where settlement began, is flanked by rugged mountains that long remained untraversed. The centre of the continent is desert or semi-desert, extending to the central southern coast. For geographic as well as historic reasons, the Australian states began from single coastal settlements, many of which marked the foundation of a new colony. Development was not by a westward movement comparable with America's, but rather by a fanning out into the interior from each original coastal settlement. Roads, railways and other communications started from,

ended in these foundation settlements, government was located there, bureaucratic and commercial head offices were there established. By the time Australia federated in 1901, each of the original settlements had already become a large modern metropolis, pivotal point for administrative, commercial and cultural life of the state of which it was capital.

The distribution of rainfall has also contributed to the "single-city" development of Australian states. There is no snowshed comparable with the Rockies. Areas with well-distributed and adequate rain for family farming tend to lie within a day's drive of one of the great cities. Villages and small towns serve these areas, but major business transactions or governmental dealings (local government has less authority in Australia than in any other English-speaking nation) result in a relationship between the big city and the individual rural dweller that is less tenuous, more functional, than in many parts of America. Beyond this comparatively narrow area lie the great inland plains, marginal areas and desert, with a sparse population operating specialized grain, sheep and cattle properties incomparably larger than have ever existed here. Apart from mining towns, usually transient, this area contains few towns or villages, and these often isolated and very small. Its basic services have been operated from the capital cities through "stock and station agencies" (large multi-purpose firms dealing in every agricultural requirement from finance to farm-beautification) and mail-order houses, facilitated by a banking structure based on the chain rather than the independent local bank. It was in these areas that Australian governments and private organizations, notably the Presbyterian church, pioneered correspondence education, travelling teachers, pedal-wireless, two- and three-way schools of the air, flying doctors, nurses and clergymen and some interesting attempts

in the remote control of adult education. A word will be said later concerning correspondence education. The other inland services are widely known, their dramatic quality having caught the imagination of both serious and popular writers. It is important only to contradict the romantic impression that this way of living and being educated is typical. It is typical merely as an example of the ingenuity Australia has shown in putting into practice a very real and strong belief in equal educational opportunity for all, at least at the elementary level.

The other aspects of the Australian personality and socio-economic trends I wish to mention are chosen not because they are necessary to our understanding of developments there as because they are similar to trends in America. Certain trends the two nations have in common are old enough in Australia to have met with complete public acceptance, if not approval. Australians would claim no final answer to problems raised by these trends, but for American readers it is less academic to consider some Australian ideas that bear on our own problems, some practices that might be adapted or at least experimented with. And to note, reciprocally, those two elements in American adult education that might best be recommended for Australian study and adaptation.

II. The Rural Center

We are concerned with the typical established rural small town, usually the administrative centre of county, shire, or "roads board district" and shopping centre for a radius of at least twenty miles, maybe far more. In population frequently below five, seldom above ten thousand, it is on a government railway, a state highway, or both. Its management is vested in the shire council or district roads board; only in the larger towns is there a separate municipal council and there is nowhere a council-manager plan. Stores, small professional offices, service stations, hotels and cafes are probably locally owned and operated --

the chain store and the hotel chain have not been very successful in Australia. But the school, probably consolidated, is on state land, is state owned, state constructed from plans made by state architects in the capital city, staffed by state employees, offering a state-designed curriculum, observing state standards and hours of operation. There may be a local Parent-Citizens Association or Parent Committee, but there is absolutely no local control. There may be a small parochial or independent residential school for girls or boys only. If so it is seldom under the management of any local trustees and is certainly subject to no local jurisdiction. Banking houses are branch offices of national banking chains. Much of the agricultural business is transacted through branch offices of the national stock and station companies. The churches are usually branches of state churches rather than independent congregations, and are sometimes financially assisted from central offices such as the Methodist Home Mission. The agricultural advisers, sometimes with inspectorial powers, are directly in the employ of and responsible to the State Department of Agriculture; there is no equivalent of the American county agent. The policemen -- Australians remain reasonably civilized with far fewer police to help them than do we -- are members of and responsible to the State Department of Police. Finally, a significant number of residents had part or all of their education and now are educating their families at one of the distant boarding schools previously mentioned, and will eventually retire to the capital city or some other coastal resort if they can. Here is a situation strange to the American adult educator trained to operate through local leaders and local organizations. So many of the citizens who are leaders here -- bankers, heads of agricultural supply houses, clergymen, school superintendents, county agents -- are there employees of the state or of state-wide organizations and subject to abrupt transfer to other

communities. So many middle class persons born locally are not locally nurtured and do not plan local retirement. Add to these human factors a dearth of organizations characteristic of the American small community: No school board. No mayor and aldermen. No council of ministers. No weekly luncheon clubs. No chamber of commerce, though there may be a local progress association. No farm organization meeting regularly, for the Primary Producers and similar associations hold meetings only when there is matter to discuss. No women's club. No county teachers club. No advisory or co-ordinating adult education council of social agencies. Add again a lack of physical facilities common in American small towns: No school auditorium. No school gymnasium (or coach or ball team!). No extensive vocational agriculture, home-making or shops plant. No Legion hall. No church basements. No hotel private dining room or convention facilities. No recreation or youth centre. No Carnegie library. No old mansion converted to women's club. Possibly, even, no regular movie theatre! Add finally the absence of traditional ceremonies that bring the public at least physically if not intellectually into their education institutions: No baccalaureate, no commencement. No senior class play. No band concert. No interscholastic competitive sporting events. No junior prom. No adult evening school. No public forum. No strictly local newspaper or radio station with its regular school news. No annual honor banquet.

To an American educator, inclined to make human judgments from lists of data, the above sociological negatives would seem to add up to "backward", a word we are apt to make synonymus with "different". In point of fact, the Australian small community is probably a settled and happy place with much to do, especially for whole families, and with less of the social tyranny (I use the word advisedly) that may dictate the lives of many middle

class people in rural towns increasingly referred to by their own residents as "over organized."

Most obvious difference to the visitor is the variety of facilities for out-door recreation in the Australian rural town, however small. Tennis courts, golf course, cricket ground, possibly combined with park or picnic area, football ground, bowling and croquet lawns, a place set aside for track and athletics, perhaps a combination showground (Fair ground) and race track. Swimming facilities are rarer for Australia is not blessed with unlimited inland water, but some place to swim exists where possible, and little lakes, swamps, artificial dams and creeks may be stocked with fish. These "public" facilities by no means exhaust the town's amenities. The school will have its playing fields on which a great variety of organized and unorganized games involve most children. Many churches have a tennis court and a Sunday school hall, cheap and utilitarian but equipped for gymnastics, badminton and other indoor games. There are many private tennis courts, often cheaply made by their owners. Nor do the facilities indicate the variety of sporting activity. Three types of football may be played on a single facility, also used for men's or women's field hockey and two importations from this continent, lacrosse and baseball. The facilities are often quite rough, the area being owned by the public but maintained by the groups who use it through a combination of professional and amateur labor. Anyone may watch any event. There is no charge for there is no commercial intent in this community sport, no coach to pay, no manager or full-time official.

Of significance to the adult educator are two facts. First, sport in rural Australia is for post-schoolage participants. One of the odd resultants of this is that there is more, not less, sport for the children in school while at the same time the school program is not

dominated by the obligation to entertain paying observers. As one's sporting career is not automatically terminated by the accident of leaving school, the governing factors in participation are the proper ones, interest and desire to participate. Studies made in small towns in Iowa* using concealed tape recorders in the natural haunts of post-school youth revealed that desire to participate continues with interest in sport till the age of approximately twenty-four; there the desire to participate abruptly declines while the interest remains. The bleacher sitter is made by the lack of facilities for the participant. School over, there is only the country club, and "you don't see jalopies at the country club". But you see every type of family transport at the Australian rural sport centres, from the new sedan to the second-hand family truck.

Second and concomitant, is the fact that adult physical recreation is an excellent social mixer. I have seen a Methodist parson and a bartender, a wealthy farmer and a hired hand, a local boxing champion and the teacher of the violin, playing together in country football. Moreover, where interest is the initiating and terminating factor, sport may be a family affair. Since competitive fixtures, if any, are made by the players for the players, they may be at any level of skill and for any age. Older people who play less may spend considerable time with the younger ones, "steadying down their game", advising, practicing shots, demonstrating. This is not paid time or duty time, but pleasure time. It affords a functional relationship across age brackets which cannot exist where youth must entertain its elders.

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* "Educational Needs, Iowa's Young Adults": Department of Public Instruction, Des Moines, Iowa, 1951; and five unpublished theses, State University of Iowa.

The Australian achievement cannot be dismissed as merely resulting from a superior climate and a British heritage. It warrants serious study, not by an adult eudcator alone but by a team representing schoolmen, adult educators, recreation directors and possibly anthropologists. The Iowa Study, if extended to statistical significance in other states, might serve as a point of departure. The point of return should be an action-research experiment of considerable duration in chosen communities, possibly in Utah or Oregon where initial interest already appears to exist. Research into adult sporting traditions is not frivolous for adult educators in a nation where need for relaxation is symtomized by mushrooming associations for mental health.

Evening social life in rural Australia centres about the town or district hall, the movies (which may be only once a week), the "pub" or bar, and the home, with the latter markedly predominating in the amount of time spent there in proportion to that spent elsewhere. Every village has its community hall and it is a source of community pride when the original frame building is replaced with a brick or stone structure useful in design and with some architectural pretensions. Rival hall building in Australian rural districts has been similar to rival school building in the American midwest. The Hall is used for public meetings, of which there are fewer than here; for the occasional extension lecture from the distant university; for local exhibitions, especially during the "show" or fair; for local talent concerts and the occasional professional touring company; for the weekly "pictures" where there is no regular movie house; most regularly for community dances. Public dances are almost always "for" something; rural Australians would be liable to boycott a dance put on by a man or group of men for personal profit. Orchestras are hired, but all other arrangements, including tea and cakes, are provided by the group holding the

function. All types of dancing are done and whole families attend. Australians can be as sophisticated as any people, but there seems no decline in the popularity of these community dances. It is ironic that in America, home of the barn dance,Presbyterian and Methodist churches should be busy publishing handbooks and recordings for folk dancing because it affords active recreation for the whole family.

But the home is the most important centre both for social and educational activity among rural adults. Lacking a local evening school and apparently any desire for one, with inferior secondary roads, higher gasoline costs, greater distances and less commercial amusement, villagers and farmers sit by their fires reading and listening to the radio. Friends -- Australians make strong and permanent friendships from personal discrimination rather than impersonal neighbourliness or occupational association* -- call informally. There may be cards, music, dancing on the verandah; there will certainly be discussion. Because of the selective basis of groups, discussion may be argumentative yet inoffensive. It may be dogmatic, opinionated, ill-informed; it may be lucid and instructed; it is usually a combination of these. And it is always uninhibited. The range and level of intellectual interests and the occupational heterogeniety of some of the groupings in and around a small town may be as surprising to an American as an initial reading of "Such is Life", that curious mixture of intellectual comment and wagon trails described as the "first" Australian novel. Finally, the home is the meeting place for organized groups with a social function, such as hospital auxiliaries, fund raisers for extra school equipment, self-appointed community improvers and the like.

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* The fundamental importance of "mateship" in Australian life is often noticed by foreign observers, and has been attributed by an American scholar, Dr. Martin Carrol, to the sufferings of the convict settlements.

Here, then, in the homes, are both the foundations of and barriers against organized adult education in the Australian rural community. If one follows the first pedagogical canon of adult educators and begins with the adults "where they are", one has a home dweller who reads, listens to radio and is conditioned to discussion. Because local facilities for these pursuits are limited or non-existant, their development may be contingent on decisions made and services organized in a remote capital city with a highly urbanized culture. Nor have the city personnel any well established organization, such as Agricultural Extension Service, through which to operate in rural areas. The obvious c hannel, the state school system, is now being used in limited ways, but in Australia as in any nation, the function of the teacher is restricted both by his proper activity and by the status accorded him by the permanent resident. Nevertheless Australians have devised or adapted machinery to meet these problems. Let us look at what is available to the Australian rural resident and his home-meeting friends.

III. Group Opportunities

The habit of reading and talking in friendly groups has been educationally directed into three main channels corresponding roughly to three interest groups: those who wish general information and discussion material about a great variety of interests; those who wish to delve more deeply into a single interest; those who wish to emphasize activity rather than passive study.

A typical service to the first of these groups is the Current Affairs Bulletin published every two weeks by the University of Sydney and edited by the Director of Tutorial Classes, Mr. J. L. J. Wilson. Originating in the Australian Army Education Service during World War II, the Bulletin was maintained after the War by the Commonwealth

Education Office and subsequently handed over to the University of Sydney where its publication is still assisted by Commonwealth grant. Much experimentation lies behind the present production, the chief problem having been that of language and illustration. Written originally by distinguished scholars in specialized fields, it early encountered the difficulties of technical terminology and scholarly language as media for the presentation of ideas for discussion by men and women of normal vocabulary and every day experience. It is still written by reputable scholars, but the original manuscripts are carefully edited and rewritten by professional adult educators to approximately the readership level of a good high school graduate and the maturity of interest of any serious adult. It does not pretend to be a "popular" publication though its cost (approximately 10 cents) is within the reach of any reader. It is tied to no specific group organization; any subscriber may use it as personal reading or may build his own discussion circle around the publication in his own way. Though published in New South Wales, it is available all over Australia. Its circulation is good but could probably be improved if other state systems were to forget a pardonable state rivalry and use it as though it were intrinsically their own. The range of topics it covers is extremely wide and diversified, from drinking and gambling habits in Australia to the cultural life of Afghanistan, from international political-economy to the power structure of an Australian town, from books and music for children to problems of aging persons. It is a good corrective for the thinking of a people in an isolated continent, for it traditionally deals with even local problems comparatively rather than provincially. Because it deals with a great variety of topics, it would be very suitable for the vast number of groups in America who like to discuss current problems but do not care to devote themselves to a protracted study of a single issue. I have used the Australian publication both in discussion classes and in Iowa's Family Forums with considerable success.

Each issue ends with suggestions for further reading and a brief guide for the leader of the discussion. Americans with whom I have used it feel that the guide to discussion should be enlarged. Perhaps an unconscious commentary on our educational system.

For those who wish to delve more deeply into a single interest, there are a variety of courses designed about continuous, graded reading and discussion materials. These may be loosely grouped under what is known in Australia as the Box Library Plan or Box Scheme. Originating in New Zealand and introduced to Australia by the University of Western Australia, and much modified through the years, this plan depends on the existence of organized groups that propose to stay in existance for a period of at least several months, maybe several years, to meet regularly and to devote themselves to a continuing study of a single topic. The course of reading is designed so that the students will advance in breadth of knowledge and depth of understanding. A series of books is selected, each book to be read by every member of the group between meetings. Each box contains as many copies of the book currently being studied as there are members in the study group, so that every one has a common reading experience. Mimeographed notes are provided to guide the reading and to link one book to the next in the series, and these notes may be regarded as filling the function of the lecturer in a teaching situation. Boxes are posted from the central authority (Adult Education Board or University Extension Service) on prearranged schedule so that the group may meet, hold its discussion, collect the next book in the series and return the previous book either to the central authority or send it on to its scheduled destination with another group studying the same topic elsewhere. A great variety of study groups may be served in this way with a minimum of organization and staff from a central authority hundreds of miles away. By the use of recordings, prints and cheap editions of plays, the social sciences can be sup-

plemented by esthetic education carried to people in communities where art galleries, orchestras, theatres and access to the facilities of institutions of higher learning do not exist.

The system has obvious limitations. The first is financial. It is obviously much more costly to run a group in which every member has his individual copy of each book to read than it is to provide only a single copy for a single reader as is traditional in the book review groups that are still part of the American adult education scene. It is particularly costly in view of the rapidity with which scholarly materials become dated today. A second difficulty arises in the very maturity that is developed by continuous study of a single subject. Eventually a group will require intellectual help that has not been foreseen by the distant writer of the continuity notes. Solving these immediate difficulties from a distant central agency which has no extension faculty to place on the highway, no transport, and probably not even a staff free to undertake immediate correspondence remedial measures, is almost impossible. Third, groups may reach a state of maturity when they wish to quit learning and start doing something, an eventuality not foreseen in the original box scheme b ut one with which Australians are now experimenting. Accordingly many groups break up or modify their own functions. What happens to these?

When a group tires of its organized study and breaks up, it does not necessarily represent failure on the part of adult education. Some members of the group may revert to inertia and indifference; they, like the poor, are always with us and are certainly not confined to the Australian rural environment. Others form new groups not necessarily devoted to continuous study but enjoying a less disciplined intellectual life in less organized group activity and contributing in a variety of ways to their own improvement and

perhaps to that of their communities. The Council of Adult Education of Victoria (a state authority) is doing a great deal to establish meaningful connections between the state authority and the local groups, with more freedom and latitude than is possible under the original box scheme. It has its own library and liaison with other libraries. It has developed boxes containing a mixed fare of reading with or without connecting notes or boxes under a single general interest but with different reading diet for each member of the group. Groups may take one box or a series. Help is being given to develop voluntary and part time rural leadership. Effort is also being made to involve the rural groups in planning and locating the summer school as an annual culmination of the year's activities.* Of maximum importance is the effort to develop intercommunication between rural groups and the central authority and between the groups themselves. The Council publishes a monthly magazine called "Group Affairs", edited by Gwendda Coalstad, through which groups are appraised of all sorts of opportunities available not only from the Council but also from other agencies, of events of interest and of plans and ideas generating either in the Council or in other groups. This small magazine seemed to me of maximum importance, not for its content but because it may represent the generation of an adult education "movement", the lack of which in the past has been a contributary cause to the poor financial position of organized adult education in Australia and to the isolation in which its distinguished pioneers have been obliged to work.

Under the direction of Lascelles Wilson, the Department of Tutorial Classes of the University of Sydney is also busy with an active learning program for self-directed groups which is appealing to many who have grown tired of or were never interested in passive study for its own sake. This program is called "Kits" and combines activity with study

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* Summer schools are described in Section IV.

directed toward activity. A Kit consists of: "1. A separate envelope for each member of the group with the name of the Kit printed on it. These are called individual Kits and inside each is a set of leaflets giving the programs for meetings and advice about carrying them out and finding the material for them. These individual Kits are the property of the members. They are intended to be read at home and brought along to meetings so that the group can plan the activities suggested in them. 2. A large folder with Master Kit and the name of the Kit printed on it. This contains directions explaining how to use the Kit; material needed for particular meetings; a copy of the leaflets contained in the individual Kits and a short questionnaire to be filled in as each leaflet is completed. The group secretary or leader should take charge of the Master Kit. 3. A box containing books, borrower's slips and instructions about their use. The library is for the whole group. A librarian should be appointed who will undertake to keep a record of the books lent."* There is also a Programme Kit designed to suggest activities for groups not yet ready to follow a full kit on any subject. This may be used by those who are planning to join a Kits program or by anyone who may need assistance in planning better programs independent of the leadership offered by the Department. At the time of my visit to Australia, there were fourteen Kits available and more in preparation. The existing Kits showed an interesting range of activities and great ingenuity. It is obvious that craft work, home making, music making and play reading lend themselves to teaching through activities and that this activity can be self-directed by a group without the physical presence of an instructor if the course is well designed and the group enjoys an element of discovery. It is not so obvious that the

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* "Kits: A New Way of Learning Through Group Activity". Department of Tutorial Classes, the University of Sydney, Sydney, N.S.W.

basic economic life of mankind can be taught without an instructor and by the process of reliving this story rather than reading about it. Yet the Kits program attempts both types of education. The Kit entitled "The Co-operative Kit" would make an admirable syllabus not merely for the American adult educator but for the high school teacher who wishes to trace the development of the cooperative movement by means other than the mere reading of books. In each Kit there is also a spice of related but vicarious learning calculated to take the member of the group beyond the learning required in his immediate activity and help him see its application in another sphere or at a higher level. A craft group making animals out of pipe cleaners learns how sculptors make wire armatures for their statuary. An astronomy group learns how to set up a "Brains Trust" of local talent. The Australians do not wish to be accused of "taking people where they are" -- and leaving them exactly there after many days!

Two more organized opportunities for continuing education exist for the rural dweller who does not wish to be associated with self-activity study groups. One of these is for the man who prefers direct instruction. As in New Zealand and Great Britain, the Australians continue to experiment with decentralized tutorial work. Members of the central authority are located as resident tutors in some of the larger rural centers of population. The system has not proved very satisfactory in the past for two reasons. First, it has never been possible to have an adequate number of resident tutors. Australia is approximately the size of continental United States and its rural distances are great and thinly populated. On limited finance, no adult education leader feels adequately staffed to cope with the immediate urban work in the great capital cities and the impossibility of paying adequate personnel to staff rural areas from the central office is freely admitted.

It may, indeed, be one of the reasons why energy and ingenuity have been displayed in the production of self-directed adult learning programs.

The second difficulty involves a philosophic argument, the old and universal one of how to train an educator. Because its adult education system started from University extension lectures and Workers Education Association tutorial classes, Australia has generally followed the British tradition. Its young adult educators hold advanced degrees in one of the disciplines, usually the humanities or social sciences. They have frequently no education training at all. Equipped to be university lecturers or assistant professors in a subject field, they go into the heterogeneity of interests of a rural town to do battle with its dragons. Many of them do very well, work too hard, and build more than they can carry. This is not surprising to Americans, for our own adult educators of the last generation could usually tell the same story*. They will talk freely of their problems to a visitor, they will admit they are trying to become expert in too many things and sometimes to a certain frustration at the lack of time for what they know best. Yet in the rural town there are many resources they have not been taught to use, ways of organizing and promoting in which they might have been trained, other professional teachers who could be imbued with the philosophy that education is a life-time process. The need for and nature of an adequate training program in Australia is discussed in Section VII. Even without a training program, some of these rural tutors might find the magazine of the Adult Education Association of the U.S.A., "Leadership," of practical use. Many Australian adult education administrators cannot see this, for the sort of thinking represented in "Leadership" is alien to their tradition. One of the state Directors, who has every issue of "Leadership" on file, remarked: "We

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* See "Leaders for Adult Education", Harry A. Overstreet and Bonaro W. Overstreet: N.Y., American Association for Adult Education, 1941. Out of print.

can't use it in our work." An Assistant Director in another state said: "We do no leadership training nor that sort of thing here." On the other hand, Gwendda Coalstad, whose group work with the Victorian Council of Adult Education has been mentioned, said: "I am finding this magazine more and more useful. Of course, we have to adapt it, but we're finding out how to do this well. Send us more of this type of publication."

The other organized opportunity is for the adult who has become a lone reader. Since Australia had no Carnegie to endow libraries in little towns, small rural centers frequently have no public library at all. Books were obtainable from local general stores, many of which both sell books and run lending libraries. Most of these are popular fiction, but odd people do odd things and Australian small towns have their share of odd people. Exploring these small towns one comes across the phenomenon of the tradesman who, as a side venture, commercializes his own reading taste. I have met a tailor who peddled the Oxford, Cambridge, and Harvard Classics and nothing else, a barber who specialized in the publications of the English Left Book Club and other socialist writings. Such specialized libraries are accidental. For the man who wishes to pursue a subject of his choice books have not always been easy to obtain. He is now able to obtain his books and some guidance through the Readers Counselor System. This is well known in the United States. Of Australia two things only need be said. In many of the Australian states, the system was not pioneered by state or public libraries, but by adult education authorities. An interesting experiment in cheap operation of the system was tried by the University of Western Australia, the only free University in the British Empire. Students doing advanced degrees were persuaded to offer their services voluntarily as the return for the privilege of a free university education. Many of them developed a real interest and a considerable correspondence with the unseen

readers whose books they helped select. The most famous of these lone readers was a gardener on a cattle station (ranch) a thousand miles away from the University who, through guided reading, became an amateur paleontologist and discovered new fossils which bear his name.

IV. Summer Schools

Australian universities have no credit summer sessions equivalent to ours. They operate day and evening for three terms or quarters and are open for advanced students and faculty, but not for teaching, during the summer quarter. The University of Western Australia pioneered the use of its campus for non-credit summer schools for rural people. Originally housing the "students" in canvas tents borrowed from the military before the existance of dormitories on the campus, the summer school has become a fixed annual event of significant proportions, with an increasing number of city dwellers in attendance and all dormitory space filled.

The summer schools are hard to describe and no American visitor should miss an opportunity to attend one. First one is struck by the cross cut of ages and occupations attending. Miners, farmers, school teachers, business men, clergymen, musicians. Old People -- even very old people -- young men and women only recently out of school, whole families. Middle class people, a few rich people, some for whom this is the only vacation they will be able to afford. There is considerable corporate spirit, lessened somewhat as non-resident city dwellers increase in numbers. There is a very healthy spirit, little of the "lone hunting" that characterizes the American student who comes to attend credit classes for personal advantage. The program is varied, embracing intensive refresher courses for professional people and cultural education of considerable

range. There is usually a central theme occupying the first part of the morning, but thereafter groups are free to follow their own interests. There is ample time for discussion, student participation and recreation. The pace is thoroughly American. The day begins (for those who are hale and hearty) with physical exercise and swimming before breakfast under the supervision of skilled directors from the National Fitness Council and ends officially with folk dancing for everyone on the lawn till as late as midnight. Unofficially, discussion groups go on until the last member falls asleep. Though there are practical and professional activities, there is no attempt at vocational training as such. The schools usually run for a week or slightly longer.

This activity has spread to the other states, not always on university premises. Victoria has begun the practice of holding summer schools outside the capital city, as has Tasmania on a small scale.

To a nation as accustomed to accreditation as is America, these summer schools are very hard to evaluate, for the satisfaction they obviously bring to their attendents is not one of measurable educational advancement but rather of a great stimulus which will afford many of them renewed motivation in the isolated areas to which they return. The best criterion for evaluation is probably the reaction of the students themselves. Some people have been attending these schools since their inception and many are long term attendants. The schools are growing rapidly and the demand places a serious strain on the personnel of central authorities. The adult educators who have been associated with them believe profoundly in their value, for they are sometimes the only physical contact made between the hardworking adult educator and the isolated rural dweller.

Australia has no continuation study centers for resident adult education. With its great distances and lower incomes, this type of development is not to be expected for some

time unless financed experimentally from abroad. The summer school therefore serves as residential adult education, and seeks to serve all interests and all groups at a single time. It is predictable that this may not continue to be possible; already the residential element is limited by facilities. The future may see repeat summer schools in a single summer or combinations of centrally and regionally located summer schools. This desirable development for rural people is, of course, contingent upon staff and finance. The adult educational authorities have not yet explored the possibility of building a fund for this activity from private sources of finance in rural areas. In New South Wales and Victoria the possibility should be explored, for these older states have considerable rural wealth. The younger states are not so situated.

It also seemed to me that planning for the annual summer schools might be used by the central authorities to commence building something in the nature of a rural adult education movement. The high corporate spirit of the student body is due in some part to the fact that people of kindred interests who live many hundred miles apart, and people who conceivably suffer a certain amount of intellectual loneliness, are able to get together with each other and with the city dwelling educators who have served them. Consulting these people about future summer schools is done casually or not done at all. Obviously, any summer school attendant or potential attendant who wishes to, may initiate planning by simply writing to the central authority at any time during the year. Australians are neither afraid to express their opinions nor lacking in initiative, and this sort of correspondence occurs. But it is not organized and makes no attempt to consult or involve all of the participants as we do in America -- perhaps too sedulously. As has been noticed, the Victorian magazine "Group Affairs" is used for this purpose but I have had access to no statistics of

the effectiveness of cooperative planning through a magazine used for many purposes and I do not believe such statistics exist. Regional or local committees might be created at least on a temporary and experimental basis, for assistance in planning the summer school program. If successful, these might form the nuclei of a rural adult education association with a real function. Were they to fail, no damage would be done to the existing system.

Australians will argue that those who really have something to say will always say it, that a great number of people are followers anyway, that an even greater number do not want to be involved in committee work and planning and express themselves better in constructive criticism than in creative planning, and, finally, that a good adult education staff learns best through personal contact with the emergent leaders who become known in any student group and by keeping its ear to the ground. The Australians can point with pride to the success of their summer schools which is undeniably self-evident. They will also point to the fact that every summer school has its own student committee with real duties and real powers, and that, though these committees disband at the end of summer school, their members do in fact constitute a continuing soundingboard for rural opinion. The fact remains that there is no research on which an answer to this problem may be based, no studied opinions as to why people attend or do not attend, why drop-outs occur, how many more and different people could be served in different ways; above all, how effective a small group of rural people with a specific job to do might prove in alerting a whole rural area to the idea of improving its adult educational opportunities.

It is one of my prejudices that we in America are inclined to attach too much importance to the latest published snippet of objective research in adult interests or needs and that too deep a reverence for the statistical norm may be one of the reasons why so

many of our programs in rural areas have shown no real maturation over many years. In many ways the Australian hit-or-miss humanism is to be envied but I at least felt that Australian adult educators were too skeptical of the value of objective research.

Apart from the information that may be gathered by the adult educator, the sort of rural committees suggested here have in mind a very real practical value. As has been said, indications are that summer schools will grow; that because of their increased attendance, they may have to be repeated or be developed on a regional basis. The West Australians, justly proud of what has grown in both quality and quantity out of their original camps under canvas, are also aware of the problem of ever increasing numbers. Some might say it is impossible, even undesirable, to grow further. This view would not merely be unethical but unrealistic. Not only in America but in many other free countries the indications are that the growth of adult education simply cannot be stopped no matter what any one agency for its control may wish. The answer to a growing demand can only be a continued effort to find ways and means of meeting it <u>without abandoning standards and directions</u> -- I cannot sympathize with the view that anything any adult does in a group or under a school roof is genuine adult education. Previous efforts to found a people's movement in Australia have failed, partly because they were sometimes set up on British models that had no sociological reality for Australia, sometimes because they were set up without any real function -- addiction to committees is not confined to the United States! The summer school, however, represents a successful and expanding activity that does have standards and directions, that is obviously meeting a felt need and that is becoming a problem in finance, staff, organization and location. Might this not be the justification for at least an experiment towards building a rural adult education movement? Born and raised in

Australian rural areas and with experience of adult education there, I am well aware of the cultural and organizational difficulties of such an experiment. My recent visit did not lead me to conclude that these difficulties were insuperable. Indeed, I believe American financial assistance could be found for such experimentation. Much American money has been expended in countries where there is neither a structure for nor a conscious value attached to adult education. Australia has an indigenous adult education system with a growing following, an accumulated experience, demonstrated ingenuity, a real system of universal education and a democratic culture.

V. Community Improvement

Everything said so far would lead the American reader to conclude that the Australian adult educator sees his function exclusively as the improvement of men's minds and has an astonishing indifference to his economic and environmental fate. I have described a whole year's program of studies culminating in the katharsis of summer school, without mentioning that preoccupying subject, community development. The program I am about to describe will be initially even more astonishing to readers familiar with the better known approaches to community development here. For this Australian program taken at face value looks like nothing more than a curriculum for esthetic education on tour.

Before considering the traveling program in the arts, let us note some further aspects of the Australian rural village. It is, as we have seen, often a happy place with excellent facilities for adult recreation and with considerable mingling of its occupational and social groups in sport and in public social events. Its people are capable of cooperative work towards immediate and practical community goals, such as "roughing out" a new sports field or cutting and hauling a winter supply of wood for the small local hospital. These efforts are often accompanied by a great deal of shouting, swearing and quarreling which

apparantly mean nothing at all, and with masculine celebration in the local bar while the wives wait for their men. There seldom seems to be a long-term goal exciting enough to hold community interest. Despite the mingling on sporting fields and at the public dances whereby money is raised for many public purposes, there is a real class structure. Established agriculturalists, the few professional people and the managers of the branch houses of state-wide agricultural firms form one group; commercial people a second, the agricultural and town labor force, usually small and transient, a third. The first group may be divided into subgroups in terms of wealth, size of property, duration of family ownership or even of educational interests and standards. Small farmers really do not form a group since many of them are starting out on new places and are basically occupied with their work. Almost every one in the village and its environment is working for those who can afford to retire have migrated to big cities or seaside. There are not many social or service clubs. There will be some sort of association for the agriculturalists and perhaps more than one, perhaps a Masonic Lodge with or without premises and small branches of other lodges, a branch of one of the servicemen's organization, several womens auxiliaries connected with churches and hospitals and other charities, no womens club and no commercial organization. There is not much talk of citizenship. Occasionally some energetic individual or group forms a progress association which flourishes and dies and life resumes its pragmatic way.

By American standards the village may be often ugly and uncared for. Like our traditional western mining towns, the stores have frontages hiding premises of wood and galvanized iron. Roofs are unpainted iron because they are frequently the only source of collecting water. Streets and sidewalks may be unsurfaced. Since the climate is everywhere comparatively mild, houses sometimes seem small and substandard. Well kept

homes with beautiful gardens stand next door to shacks surrounded by weeds and unpainted fences slowly shedding their pickets. Ornamental trees are few and planted by the interested householder to suit himself rather than to beautify the town. The railway yards are in the very middle of the village but there appears to be no right or wrong side of the tracks. There is no sewer system, water supply, sometimes no electricity.

Most of its inhabitants send their children to its single school which is usually known as "the government school". Built and owned by the state government on state land, the school is staffed by state school teachers employed by and sent out from the state Department of Education to which they are responsible and for which they operate the state designed curriculum at state controlled standards. Typically the school embraces kindergarten and eight grades (American equivalent, ten grades, the Australian school year being longer than here). There is no vocational agriculture or homemaking teacher who may be contracted for adult education classes. The pupil who will attend till 15 years of age, will get the equivalent of a good junior high school education in America, with a thorough grounding in fundamentals, no formal vocational training, few or no electives, drawing, singing but no drama or instrumental music other than maybe organized spontaneously, ample playground activity.

Despite the fact that they have neither tax responsibility for it nor control over it, rural people generally believe in a good education and also believe that children get it through the state school system, and many take advantage of the regional state high schools located in larger rural towns and send their children there for a final two years. The local teachers are not under moral obligation to behave as paragons, as is sometimes the case in rural communities in America, and enter the sporting and social life of the community, but are ostracized if they "talk shop". The rural parent, it would appear, is interested in sending his child to school and seeing that he there behaves according to all the rules, but is not

interested in education as such. Many schools do put on childrens plays and concerts; there are picnics and Christmas celebrations and there may be a committee of parents and citizens, largely according to the personality of the school principal. Adult educators have had no voice in the training of this principal, for he has no adult education responsibilities, nor apparently have the adult educators associated themselves organizationally with the parent or citizen committees, though there is box scheme material for study groups in child psychology.

The Australian approach to community development is an incidental one; indeed, it might be described as an accidental one, for its original purpose was not the instruction of rural populations in community improvement but the equalizing of at least minimal opportunities for esthetic experience between small and large centers of population. Like most of the good programs emanating from Australia's official adult education authorities, it represents a phase of the humanist philosophy of liberal education on which the Australian system was founded. This is the belief that no community is better than the people who comprise it and the corollary that the cultural education of the individual will automatically improve the community. As early as 1870, the expression of this philosophy was the extension lecture. The distances, the cost, the increase of on-campus work for university teachers and changes in the cultural patterns of life caused a gradual discontinuance of this procedure which, in any case, had never represented an organized service to the smallest communities. It was followed by the development of the Workers Education Association which organized tutorial classes using, where possible, resident tutors or visitors from the University over short distances. These classes were lecture-discussion-reading organizations similar to those of the more extensive English associations. While they represented serious adult education in the social studies, they tended to be confined to the largest rural cities where

there was a vigorous commercial life and some element of industrialization. The third approach I have described at length, the cultural and social education of groups through prepared materials ranging in type from passive study to creative activity. As has been noticed, the Kits Program of the University of Sydney may involve the direct study and use of the local community and suggest the creation of service groups in the community though it offers no standard plan for community development. At the time of my visit to Australia, there was no Kit specifically and exclusively dealing with the techniques and the goals of community development.

The fourth phase, most advanced in the state of Victoria under the competont and subtle direction of Mr. Colin Badger, is generic; but behind the direct satisfaction it offers to esthetic taste and the opportunity for improvement in knowledge and enjoyment of the better art forms, there is, at least in the mind of Director Badger, a long term goal for community improvement, regional development and administrative changes that, in terms of Australia's history, are revolutionary.

These plans are the resultant of the discovery that a certain type of service to the rural community automatically resulted in the revival of community pride and practical activity. The program was the result of the decision to use in civilian life some of the "sugar on the pill" which had proved successful in army education. Professor Fred Alexander of the University of Western Australia, who will be personally known to many Americans, enjoyed during World War II the probably unique position of being Commanding Officer of the Australian Army Education Service, Western Command, and at the same time permitted to retain the honorary directorship of the Board of Adult Education of the University of Western Australia. This was physically possible because both headquarters were situated in the capital city of Perth; how so intelligent an arrangement became

militarily possible I am unable to say! Alexander is a man of creative imagination and adventurous trial and error experimentalism. Faced with a military that required of all its non-fighting troups an hour of general and cultural education on army time, he developed an approach which he describes as "entertainment plus". On return to civilian life he spent considerable energy developing open air theatre, music, opera, foreign films of quality and other aspects of education in the appreciation of the arts, a development which has culminated in the now-annual Festival of Perth. As staff and finance permitted, the program was extended to rural areas in the form of travelling theatre and music. "Everyman's Music" consisted typically of an evening devoted partly to teaching and demonstrating what classical music is and partly to playing it without comment. The travelling theatre was operated at minimum cost, one of the privately owned bus companies providing the Board with a bus especially designed to carry the players in front and the scenery in back in such a way as to facilitate high speed setting up or moving of the equipment. In local towns on the circuit, the public school acted as the agent for the visitors who would devote their daytime to enriching the school program and their evening to the adults. As the result of these visits, a staff member was detached experimentally for residence in a rugged wheat belt community where he helped develp its own dramatic life.

In Western Australia the program has been strictly limited by available staff and finance. In this state also the aim of the program remains purely cultural---surely a sufficient justification? To study the spontaneous generation of community improvement and resulting long range plans, we must turn to the same program in Victoria.

Victoria is the smallest and most evenly settled of the Australian mainland states. Though characteristically dominated by a single great city, (Melbourne, approximately one and one half million) it has a better distribution of agricultural land of use for family

size farms, well established rural towns and reasonable cross-country communications. Its official adult education agency is the Council of Adult Education, set up as a separate bureau by the Adult Education Act 1946, and financed from state funds that are not sufficient to meet its potential but are more substantial than in any other state. Its director, Mr. Colin Badger, has created the nucleus of a permanent travelling theatre and other services in the arts and has developed for them regular circuits and regular appearances. As in Western Australian the project is subsidized and not expected to make profit. It is expected to give service to rural communities large and small and profits made in a town of 5,000 or more are cheerfully expended in a village of 500 or less. While there are the inevitable skeptics who refer to this program as "Badger's Circus", there is ample evidence of its support in rural areas. The rural politician who proposed to economize by deleting the subsidy from the state budget would find himself in serious trouble.

The unforeseen concomitant of this Chautauqua-like program appeared in small communities in terms of an immediate, single and practical goal requiring the sort of community effort characteristic of the Australian village. Its origin was originally shame; shame for the shattered old piano, the squeaky stage on which the very pleasant visiting musician cheerfully gave his teaching-concert. An organization would generate to raise money to provide a new piano. The government was persuaded to establish low interest, long-term loans for communities wishing to provide their public halls with new pianos, and 72 new concert grand pianos have found their way into rural areas for public use in the post-war years. The new piano could not be trusted on the shaky old stage; accordingly a new stage was built. From a seat at the new piano on the new stage the unpainted, part-finished rural hall looked shabby indeed; accordingly painting, repairing, draping, refurnishing were undertaken. Now the exterior had to be painted and repaired,

and once the hall had become a place to be proud of, the local green thumbs were called in to beautify the lot on which it stood. From this point anything might happen, for the eyes of the community had been critically turned upon itself and the creative energy of the community emerged from the homes and the fenced-in private gardens and applied itself to public facilities. In the small communities much of it had been done by volunteer effort, in the larger communities the labor may have been professional, but the fund raising and the planning were by a cross-cut of the community.

Of more importance than the immediate goal accomplished is the continued existence of this group. In Victoria it is not exclusively a public school group. Those who serve as local representatives for the itinerant programs offered by the Council of Adult Education are drawn from many occupations and increasingly constitute a permanent group of persons conscious of the rewards of adult education, aware of the available resources and competent to organize, but one that is also increasingly concerned about and active in the development of both facilities and values in the local community. It is not surprising that such groups begin to look beyond the travelling theatre to other activities offered by the Council and very soon to the generation of local activities and the better use of local talents in ways not depending on the guidance of a central authority. The Victorian Council is already functioning in some communities as a stimulus to program development rather than as a direct source of programs.

These are the groups whom Mr. Badger hopes eventually to direct into constructive channels for the future reorganization of local and regional government. Unlike America, Australia began with centralization rather than evolving towards it. The military government of New South Wales as a penal colony was entirely centralized in Sydney for obvious reasons. Other states, including those that were not settlements for the deportation

of English convicts, followed the same pattern. But as agricultural enterprise has moved ever further away from the original settlement, has taken its established economic form and concentration of population and has begun to demand those amenities characteristic of permanent settlement, there is evidence that considerable divergence may develop between the thinking of an urban bureaucratic headquarters staffed frequently with people whose lives and educational experiences have all been urban, and the needs and thoughts of rural people who are no longer pioneering but following a way of life established now for several generations. New South Wales is deliberately decentralizing its bureaucracy, but mere decentralizing of a central bureau by fiat of that bureau does not necessarily ensure a more realistic relationship of it to rural life. Mr. Badger believes that decentralization not merely of offices but also at least partial decentralization of control and function can only be brought about effectively when the rural people have defined for themselves what it is they wish to control and how and to what extent they are prepared to control it. This is a process of education and growth occupying much of his long-term thinking. An American might comment that this type of thinking need not be always as solitary as it appears to be in Australia; but the comment is offered diffidently, for major changes in the traditional administrative procedures of states inevitably involve political considerations of the most difficult and complex type.

Other developments in Australia may accelerate the realization of these aims. Tasmania has a well established system of regional schools so-called because they are specifically designed to take the color and meet the needs of the regions in which they are located and to be schools for families rather than just children. These schools could be used by the Tasmanian Board of Adult Education if cooperative agreements could be made between the Board and the State Department of Education at their

administrative centers. New South Wales has regionally located technical colleges, teachers colleges and university colleges, and after World War II established in Armidale the University of New England, the first rurally located independent state university in Australia. Though the local institutions are responsible to three separate administrative bureaus in Sydney, there is considerable local cooperation in certain areas, and this is beginning to develop official status. The University of New England is an interesting example. It is officially responsible for correspondence education at university level for the entire state of New South Wales with the exception of the city of Sydney, and is the only University maintaining a staff entirely devoted to full-time correspondence teaching. Efforts are being made to couple the correspondence work with group study using both the central staff and also local leadership. At the University is also a person responsible for the development of non-credit adult education who is a member of the Department of Tutorial Classes of the University of Sydney. This person is in a position to utilize the materials of the University of Sydney, the personnel of the University of New England, to associate non-credit and credit adult education and to design his work in the area and for the needs of the area in which he works. Western Australia is also regionalizing the program of its state schools. In this state certain rural communities have been able to avail themselves of expert assistance in town planning through a project developed by the Senior Technical College located in the capital city. As part of the training program in architecture and town planning, cooperative groups have been established between architects, town planning commissioners and students in the city and those responsible for local government in the chosen rural community. The planning of the rural community is then undertaken, there being several meetings by the local governing authorities and the qualified city people, and continuous field work carried on by the students. As this

is a student training project and not a service program, its application is strictly limited. The work I have seen was very thorough and scientific.*

It will be noticed that this is a different approach to community development from that of the Council of Adult Education of Victoria. The former is a meeting between authorities and experts with a view to improvement through the existing power structure; the latter the creation of a citizen need for better facilities in the community without direction as to how these can be obtained. The former teaching project could well be developed into an organized service program to be used in conjunction with the latter. Without some participation by local residents, the result of planning is likely to be the substitution of a local bureaucracy for a state bureaucracy. I spent some time in a small rural community where there had been a planning project, and asked a number and variety of citizens what they thought of the plans. Few of them knew there were any plans, and the Chairman of the local Roads Board seemed surprised at my suggestion that the population might have been involved in the planning instead of the mere acceptance or rejection of the plans when time came to submit them. The same was true of the capital city, Perth, which was in the process of planning for a population more than double its present size. Though a number of citizens knew from press and radio announcements that distinguished authorities from London, England and Cambridge, Mass., were working with the city planning commission, the nature of the planning was known to few and there were no citizen committees. There were also no classes for adults to alert them to needs, introduce them to planning or to train leaders for this type of involvement.

Before closing this section, we should remind ourselves that the traveling arts

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* "Kojonup: Report of Survey and Recommendations for the Future Development of Townsite". Department of Architecture, Perth Technical College, Perth, W.A., 1953.

program in Australian adult education was not designed to prosecute community development projects but to equalize cultural opportunities between city and rural areas and to further cultural education. There is ample evidence that the program is well received. A simple test of its popularity is to join a group of rural people and condemn this subsidized esthetic activity as a waste of public money. The American who so does will first have the Australian view of equal educational opportunities politely explained to him; if he persists, he may be indoctrinated concerning the equal cultural rights of rural people in no uncertain terms. Visiting in rural areas along the circuit, I was interested to find the program forcefully defended by small farmers with no college education as well as by educated professional people. But the popularity of the program is not necessarily an index of the wisdom of financing it. We have already noticed its potential for community development. We should now notice the regeneration of creative activity of a cultural nature. Small rural communities are organizing their own annual festivals, sometimes lasting for several days. I attended one such festival in a community of 200 people which, since it had no public hall, celebrated its festival in the public streets. I was impressed with both the quality and the spirit of this festival and the pride in its indigenous character. It may be argued that there is no utility in such activities. This is a question the answer to which Australians take for granted; anything that enriches the enjoyment and appreciation of life in a wholesome and creative atmosphere is legitimate educational endeavour. But the adult educator's answer is more specific. If Australia is to enjoy not only political independence but to throw off the vestigial colonial mind, she must not only share in the original work of scientific and critical scholarship in the universal truths that exist from country to country, but must develop a social creativity and frame work of criticism that are true in and for Australian life. Apart from the

struggle for a better indigenous culture, Australians will remind one that the wise use of leisure is a universal problem in industrial countries. Australia is an industrial country with an increasingly mechanized agriculture. They will point to the embarrassing productivity of American agriculture, and ask if the expenditure of public funds exclusively for vocational education can be philosophically justified.

VI. Unofficial Channels of Rural Adult Education

This paper has thus far confined itself to an account of typical programs for rural areas designed by professional adult education organizations. This is partly because the American reader is probably most interested in the work of his professional colleagues, partly because what I am about to describe is not thought of in Australia as adult education. Because there are state agencies for adult education, the term there tends to connote only the work of these agencies whereas in America it is increasingly a general term covering many varieties of adult learning from many sources. For the formal instruction of adults, each Australian state has institutions of higher learning differentiated according to their function. Many of these have evening classes offering a wide range of vocational and avocational activities, for credit or non-credit, leading to a diploma or merely satisfying an immediate need. In the distribution of classes according to function of instruction, advanced intellectual activity naturally centered upon the universities. Whereas the other institutions offered classes only on their own premises, and therefore were accessible only to city dwellers or to residents in really large country towns, the universities pioneered the effort to reach the rural dweller. In the six Australian states today, three of the state universities remain in control of this work. In the other three there are now legally created state boards holding this responsibility, and these in two cases are offshoots of universities. With limited funds, the universities

and state boards do what they are best qualified to do, dedicating their chief efforts to the improvement of Australia's intellectual life. But the rural dweller is also served by other agencies, some of them state and some of them citizen organized, which have at least a partial significance in his educational life. In many cases the educational quality of the services he receives could be improved if those who serve him were given a minimum training in human relations and adult education techniques, and saw their work not merely as imparting information or issuing directives but as building also a climate of learning, an attitude of mind.

Of obvious importance is the work of the state Departments of Agriculture. With headquarters in the capital cities, these departments own and maintain experimental farms and agricultural stations and also have a variety of field workers resident in rural areas. The field representatives have certain duties which carry authority. They have a share in enforcement of agricultural law and regulations. They supervise the activities of farmers the title to whose land is still held by the state. They have inspectorial duties concerned with the control of disease and quality of produce, particularly produce for export. In addition they have the general duty of seeking ways and means of improving agricultural practice in the district in which they live. For this, in effect, educational duty they have, of course, no authority and the success of activities depends a great deal on the personality of the regional representative. Now almost universally the product of a university, these men have been through academic training of world standard, but have had no training in human relations, the organization and teaching methods of adult education, rural sociology or the social sciences. They work in areas where there might be marked prejudice against the academically trained agriculturalist; they work among men often considerably their seniors in years and in experience; they live in

districts where the school has no vocational agriculture teacher to make youth receptive to their work and they have had no official or unofficial liaison with farmers' organizations equivalent to the Farm Bureau.

This picture is changing at different rates in different parts of Australia. In many places the resident agricultural official will be a respected member of the local branch of the Primary Producers Association or the Royal Agricultural Society, will have many experimental projects running on private properties and will have the confidence and respect of the resident farmers and a considerable influence, along with the school teachers, in the development of Young Farmers Clubs or the like. In other cases, he is still a lone and angry man. His situation is almost invariably traceable to his initial contacts with significant people and organizations. There is no reason why he could not be trained both in human relations and in the better organization of educational activities, including cooperation with other agencies that might not be connected with agriculture but which could help him in educational organization. The initiative for this training or help must come from the agricultural department. One Australian university experimented with schools for farmers, and was very successful. Seeing their success, the agricultural department of that state withdrew its own personnel from cooperating in the university organized school, and set up its own institutes. These failed. Meanwhile the University discontinued its efforts for which cooperation with the department of agriculture was at least politically advisable, if not technically necessary.

The state school system in several states is also showing an awareness of its vocational responsibility and the importance of differing curricula and personnel in differing districts. Adult vocational agriculture classes in evening schools have not yet developed extensively, so adult education in agriculture has been mainly through the

printed word. Excellent agricultural journals are published by the state departments of agriculture and there is a considerable circulation of these across state boundaries. I grew used to seeing the current issues in farm kitchens, a strategic location for a standard reference journal. The weekly newspapers devote considerable space to agriculture and to other phases of rural life. The various farm organizations publish good house journals and specialized pamphlets. But I was also impressed with the weekly or monthly magazines published by the commercial houses known as stock and station agencies. These are no mere advertizing channels, but are instructional magazines competently written and edited, using wide sources of information and concerning themselves not only with agricultural efficiency but with the improvement of gracious living on the farm. One such publication has been responsible for the planting of thousands of ornamental trees many of which were imported to beautify the treeless sand plains and the areas of summer drought. The farmer who can and does read is well supplied with the materials of self-education. There has been no scientific research on the extent or nature of the readership of these publications, nor, for that matter, into the reading abilities and habits of rural adults. Australia has no serious illiteracy problem but military tests have shown that levels of reading ability can be low in backward rural areas. Some research in this field would be of interest, for there may be a need of more organized direct instruction and conference. In Western Australia annual regional conferences of a teaching nature are now organized as the Co-operative School for Farmers, structured by the state farmers' cooperative headquarters, the university department of agricultural science, the state Department of Agriculture and the regional Agricultural Society. This process of organization avoids the possibility of bureaucratic rivalry and ensures good participation as the programs are planned for and by those participating. Proceedings are published.

Homemaking as we have known it in the public schools has also been neglected by the state educational departments. Domestic science was universally taught in schools. Until recently, it was strictly domestic science rather than homemaking and even now has only an accidental relationship with adults. The most active organization for the improvement of home living is the Country Women's Association, also active in America. A non-political organization, its direction is by elective authority but it maintains permanent staff at national, state and regional headquarters and a varying number of field workers. It has its own training schools, emphasizing work in the home arts and in craft work, and issues its own certificates for teaching competence. But its great strength lies in its volunteer workers in the rural districts and in the realism of its program in relation to rural home life and levels of interest and formal schooling. The program is wide and practical: improving the cuisine, beautifying the home, practical and psychological parent education, recreations for the family, topics for group discussion, the improvement of meetings and local programs, recreation, reading, home industries, crafts, music and drama. It maintains a travelling library and home science van, holds competitions, arranges tours and demonstrations, and publishes a magazine of considerable value as a channel of intercommunication between rural groups, and an official Annual. It has become increasingly interested in national and international affairs, but the interest is practical, humanistic and non-political. It seeks to make living in the current generation more gracious and more productive but does not concern itself deeply with the development of the critical intelligence. With a membership in the tens of thousands in each state, and with sectional activities for differing age groups, CWA is perhaps the most important membership agency of adult education for rural women. The political and

economic status of women has been more the concern of the Women's Service Guild, mainly active in cities but also reaching tenuously into rural areas.

There is no equivalent organization for rural men. The farmers associations are active politically and economically, but usually have no organized general education program and are exclusive of the rural village dweller. Service clubs which are typical of America are not wide spread in rural Australia. There are no community councils or adult education councils as we know them. Men and women may work together in the parents committees to improve the extracurricular activities and equipment of the local school, but the school principal is under no obligation to organize such a committee or even to deal with one already in existence. He has the authority to exclude it from school premises. The local branch of the Returned Soldiers League may offer an avenue for certain social services, especially to families of service men who are in difficulties. Toc H, a service organization born of the idealism of World War I, seems to have died out in rural areas. Rural men have not shown great creativity in organized opportunities for citizenship and this is one of the neglected areas in the pattern of Australian adult education. A recent development in Sydney, Melbourne and Perth may eventually affect this aspect of rural life. In these three cities there have been developed Councils of Social Service. These consist of small coordinating offices under the direction of trained personnel and supported by public and private funds. Their task is to coordinate the work of public agencies of social service with that of the great number and variety of volunteer organizations. They are therefore fundamentally educational and they operate through consultation, publications and conferences. They have no official connection with universities or other institutions of higher learning but they cooperate closely with relevant

departments, such as psychology and political science, and are doing a great deal to lessen at the adult level the gap that often existed between academic and non-academic people as the result of the old system of public education which was selective from the sixth grade. At present this is fundamentally an urban movement, but is certain eventually to influence the rural communities where the same pattern of social service exists. In 1953, eighty non-governmental agencies were members of the New South Wales Council and sixty three of the Victorian. Most of these were state-wide organizations. Significant of the educational approach being taken is that of the 1953 annual conference of Victoria which was entirely devoted to planning, and was a typical modern conference in the procedure followed.

The general education of adults in rural areas depends more on reading and listening than upon classes and group activities. The weekly rather than the daily paper represents the newsreading of rural persons. I will not weary the reader with an extensive analysis of the Australian press, which does not differ greatly from that of England or America, except to say that, in addition to the heavy emphasis on politics and sports and a good coverage on international news, usually in brief paragraphs without comment, more space seems to be devoted to a considerable variety of quasi-educational topics and less to what we call the human interest story. In addition to the standard press there are a number of publications by commercial houses, such as the chain banks, which are increasingly devoted to Australiana, along with the commercial news or advertisement the concern wishes to bring before its readers. Magazine publishing shows considerable vigor in contemporary Australia. Not all the experiments are successful. Every year brings some new experimental magazine ranging in specialization from nature study to

social history and the arts. Though many of them find their way within a few years to the dead files of the National Library, their brief existence stimulates other activity, particularly that of keeping the regular press alert to the fact that if its coverage is not sufficiently wide, its competitors will succeed. They probably also exert influence on the format of the publications of such organizations as the State Historical Associations and the Australian Geographic Society, whose magazines have shown marked improvement in recent years. This is beginning to be true of the publication of state and federal bureaus which in the past have been far too unattractive in format for extensive use in rural areas.

Radio broadcasting in Australia operates through the national channels of the Australian Broadcasting Commission and the less powerful channels of commercial networks operating in competition with the national service. This system, fundamentally more democratic than ours since it is not restricted to catering for the buying majority,* has proved a useful supplement to adult education in rural areas. In addition to entertainment, the ABC has its own educational program and its experience as a "school of the air" for isolated rural children has given its leaders an experimental approach that could be more reflected in its adult work. In addition to its own program, free time is made available to adult educators and co-sponsored programs, particularly in music, has characterized its work in some states. The adult educators could make more use of the ABC if they would pay more attention to the nature of the medium.

Since World War II, rural areas have increasing access to educational films and to libraries. Here again the channels serving them are separate organizations. There is a free library movement in almost every state the work of which is supplemented by

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* For the writer's views on democracy in radio-TV see "The Iowa Publisher", July, 1954.

government grants. While giving the best service they can to rural people, these boards are increasingly concerning themselves with the education of the rural public towards the development of its own library system. Publicly owned art collections are available to rural areas on extended loan from the state galleries. Films are available from separate state boards operating with government grants. In certain states boards are developing regional film libraries in the large rural towns. The film festival has made its appearance in Australia, rising from the conventions of film societies, independent citizen organizations which have federated in New South Wales and Victoria.

In closing, mention should be made of recent increases in the opportunities rural people have for higher study towards a degree through correspondence. At the elementary and secondary levels, Australia is a world leader in the development of correspondence education. Correspondence courses in the trades and professions have been commercially developed, and university work by correspondence has been available on a limited scale. Correspondence work in universities was usually undertaken, as it is here, by the regular faculty in addition to their on-campus work. As Australian university teaching traditionally involves more writing on the part of the student and marking on the part of the teacher than does American, there were human limits to the development of correspondence work. Post war attendance at universities and decentralized university colleges has increased in Australia on a scale almost comparable with America with consequent burdens on the regular faculty. As the demand for correspondence work also increased something had to be done. The University of Queensland began to appoint a special staff whose sole w ork would be correspondence instruction. In New South Wales the University College at Armidale was erected into the independent University of New England and given the

responsibility of correspondence education for the entire state with the exception of the city of Sydney. Here, too, an independent department has been created with a special staff giving full time to correspondence teaching. The University of New England is fortunate in its leadership. Vice-Chancellor Madgwick, originally of the department of economics of the University of Sydney, was during the war Commanding Officer of Australian Army Education Service, an organization which operated not only through full time trained personnel, but through part time and part trained Unit Education Officers and a great number of untrained volunteers. The operation of this service in remote jungles and barren deserts as well as settled areas in open competition with other attractions for troups, with the support of some military commanders and the active hostility of others and with the continual problem of both military and civilian politics, was not only a unique administrative experience for an educator but also a realistic introduction to the interests, levels of achievement and problems of a great variety of people not normally under the surveillance of a university lecturer. It is therefore not surprising to find the University of New England will not be satisfied with merely offering correspondence lessons, correcting them at a central office and doling out grades. It is too early yet to judge the success of the experiments in group study, visitation, vacation sessions on campus and other experiments the University is planning to overcome the loneliness of this form of study, the high percentage of failure and drop-outs and the absence of the liberal experience that is supposed to go with residential study. Dr. Madgwick sees this work as but one side of rural adult education, the other side of which is also being planned. In the long term it is hoped to find natural ways of associating the credit and non-credit work and to develop a system of rural adult education that, if it eventuates, will be unique in Australia.

VII. Reflections After a Journey

This paper has deliberately avoided the statistical approach commonly used by students of comparative education. The data obtainable from published Australian reports would have ample meaning in a study of urban adult education, but the structure of the Australian rural community in terms of municipal power and social and educational services is so radically different from ours that accumulated figures me an very little without an accompanying sociological analysis. Therefore I chose to describe simply selected activities that seem to reinforce or serve as commentary on some American trends, particularly those that persist in my thinking after many months.

Urbanization is more advanced in Australia than here; approximately two-thirds of the population of each state lives in a single city and its ever increasing surburbia. For strategical and social reasons, governmental efforts are being made to decentralize industry but without great success. Transport costs and proximity to major markets are obvious causes, but a major contributary cause is the lack of skilled labor in rural areas. Country-born children comprise a large element in the urban labor force, but their industrial training has usually been obtained at the great urban technical colleges. New South Wales has done more to decentralize its technical education than have other states, but the technical colleges in both urban and rural areas have been regarded as centers of training rather than education. Well staffed with competent instructors, they have had cramped premises of a purely utilitarian nature, no dormitories and practically no campus life. There is not in Australia the equivalent of the American college of agriculture and mechanic arts, though it does have excellent residential agricultural schools for teen-age boys. In addition to the dearth of adequate training facilities for a rural

labor force, the great cities are socially much more attractive to industrial labor. Unless he is a potential farmer working to acquire a property of his own or a brilliant athlete, the wage earner enjoys no status in the rural area, no social circle, no serious attempt to raise his educational or economic level and limited opportunities for marrying and family life. Speaking on this topic in 1947, Mr. Frances Field, then Minister of Public Instruction in Victoria, said: "Adult education has a most important part to play in this, both directly, by disseminating information about regional and town planning, encouraging discussion of the aims to be achieved and by stimulating realistic criticism of particular plans; and indirectly, by creating conditions in the countryside which will make life there pleasanter and more attractive. We recognize that the drift to cities cannot be stopped by negative prohibitions. . ."* As we have seen, technical education is not a function of universities. They, together with the state boards that have generated from them, have done or are doing a great deal to make life in the country pleasanter and more attractive. It is also true that the Universities of Sydney and Adelaide work with the vestigial remains of what is still called the Workers' Educational Association, but this moribund organization cannot pretend to any influence in the policy and power structure of organized labor. The whole system of public education in Australia is deeply indebted to labor political thinking with its traditional belief in equal educational opportunities for all. With the exception of the University of Western Australia, which recently revived a long-neglected attempt to stimulate adult education in the trade union movement, no Australian university or adult education authority seems to consider the problem of labor education at all. Labor education as we know it within the ranks of the trade union movement itself simply does not

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* Speech at the first meeting of the Council of Adult Education, May 23, 1947.

exist in Australia. Labor is prodigiously powerful and, with the exception of a few leaders, in continual danger of the monstrous mediocrity that comes when power is held too easily on the basis of mass organization rather than public information. Of the university leaders, Dr. Madgwick of New England is the only one to raise his voice for the correction of this situation. The University of New England, though rurally situated in a non-industrial small town, may prove a suitable place for the development of short residential schools for labor leaders and would offer an excellent opportunity for labor and country leaders to meet on a basis of the discussion of mutual problems by the educational process rather than that of organized political opposition. Accidental acculturation may occur at the summer schools, but there have been no Farmer-Labor Conferences such as those organized by American Labor Education Service in the Dakotas.

Apart from this omission, which should be attributed to the multiform administration of higher education in Australia rather than the adult education authorities as now constituted the Australian program is to be commended because it is a serious effort to prevent any real distinction developing between rural and urban influences in the national culture. In this sense, the city is put to work for the country in a way not common here. The American tradition of independent school districts results in every town declaring its independence of educational responsibility to the county as soon as it possibly can. Consolidation and reorganization of school districts means better education for rural children but does not mean a responsibility of the urban to the rural environment. This is particularly true in the field of adult education. It will be argued that our state colleges, some of our universities and departments of public instruction, do much to mitigate this. There is an essential difference between the resources of a university and those of a large city, between modern living and the academic interpretation of modern living. The Australian effort seems to me dedicated to marshalling

together the resources of city and country outside the academic approach. That this is slowly being achieved seems to be indicated by the use of public funds, inadequate but increasing, expended by a public board under no direct control of any government or government department nor any system of higher education other than itself, and bounded by no vocational education system of regulations.

Another American trend which is well advanced in Australia is the increasing effort put into the production of program materials for the use of groups that must operate without direct instruction or administrative assistance. Though other phases of adult education in Australia may be more dramatic, this is the field in which it has done its most basic work. Of interest to us should be efforts to offer not only varieties of experience but to encourage isolated groups to achieve some thoroughness and continuity and to reject superficial understanding. We have seen that this is not merely true of passive study groups, but that the Kits program based upon activity is also designed to encourage some continuing education. With our higher mobility and income, we have developed the "one shot" technique of regional conferences far beyond the Australians. I believe we have also produced a greater variety of Kits, particular methodological kits, for the single meeting or conference. If it is true, as the students of group dynamics claim, that groups mature and that individuals in groups also mature, there is a responsibility for the provision of materials for groups and individuals who have passed through the adult kindergarten of human relations to the freedom of enjoying mental and socially creative life. America is confusingly rich in materials. Should more be done here in the collection, grading and collation of these materials into self-directed courses for groups, designed to ensure not merely pleasure but maturation?

In the field of cultural education for rural people, I believe Australians are ahead of us in the concept of their task, the adventurous spirit with which they experiment through shoestring operations, their dual goals and their belief that liberal education for no visable financial gain is nevertheless utilitarian in character values, mental health and general development of the personality. We have not seriously tackled this problem in the small rural community whose evening school is often of pathetically low standard except in the vocational agriculture class, whose service club calls attendance like an elementary school and whose adult population obliges its own school youth to entertain it and then provides no continuing activities for them after graduation. It may be argued that because of greater density of population, residents in small communities have access to nearby large communities where better opportunities for both the passive and active use of leisure may exist. Before this accessibility is availed of, the desire must exist. To create this desire is one of the primary purposes of the Australian program. It may also be argued -- indeed it has already been eloquently argued by the President of NBC --* that commercial television will create a "total elite people" by bringing the best of everything to everyone everywhere. I do not doubt the power of modern mass media to remove cultural barriers, and Australia is entering the field of television with a dual system similar to its radio networks. Speaking at the Los Angeles Conference of the Adult Education Association of U.S.A., Mr. Robert Blakely forcefully reminded adult educators, if we need to be reminded, of the ever increasing opportunities for vicarious living in America. The Australian live program is not dedicated to increasing such opportunities but to correcting them. It is a teaching as

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* "TV Offers a New Renaissance" -- a speech by Sylvester Weaver given to the Institute of Practictioners in Advertising, in London, England, Sept. 27, 1955. Printed as a supplement to World's Press News and Advertizers' Review, London, Sept. 30, 1955, with permission of Television Digest, Wyatt Bldg., Washington 5, D.C.

well as an entertaining program, and its purpose is to regenerate and raise to a higher level the local activities that characterized communities before the professional world entered the living room, and to make this possible in really small communities. Ironically, we are incomparably better equipped for this sort of work than are the Australians. Our universities have great schools of drama, music and the creative arts, including writing. Our small communities have the school auditorium or at least a gymnasium-auditorium combination. We could operate cheaply by the use of students, for whom work of this nature would be a valuable experience, where the Australians frequently have to use professionals. We would need to rethink the organization of the course program in liberal arts colleges for senior students and graduates, but we are certainly not a conservative nation in the matter of educational organization. And we have two very good reasons for prosecuting the American ideal of trying to raise total cultural standards. The first is to create a larger market for the talent that we are increasingly training since we took the radical step of associating universities with teaching of the creative as well as the critical. Second, with widespread rural mechanization and automation a reality, the admonition of Carlyle, "Produce! Produce! In God's name, Produce!", is beginning to ring hollow.

Australia has much to offer us; may I conclude by suggesting those two elements in the developing philosophy of adult education in America which would constitute our most relevant contribution to Australia?

The first is a managerial concept, for America's genius lies not so much in originating and venting as in organizing. We have noticed that Australia has many organizations that have a de facto concern with adult learning but also has state organizations bearing the specific title "Adult Education", with a consequent tendency to confine the concept of adult education to

the work of these agencies. The independent existence of other organizations, such as the film boards, the free library boards, the divisions of technical education and the like and their competition with each other for government grants and other financial support is not to be deplored; competition is as good for education as it is for industry. But the consumer may be defeated by the same competition which is good for the organizer. Unless the concept of adult education is made more synonymous with adult learning some adults are liable to be overlooked, others to be kept in one organization when they should be referred to another, still others "cured" of any interest in adult effort because of an initial approach to the wrong agency and a failure there to receive help and guidance. American ideas and methods of cooperation and coordination at both the state and community level are worthy of Australian study. As in cultural education, the idea, the attitude, must be developed first. My habit of exploring the work of a great variety of organizations whose names did not include "education" and whose programs were not labeled "educational", was sometimes mystifying to professional adult educators. "What are you looking for?" I would be asked. "For the way adults get educated", I would reply. There would follow the silence characteristic of people who speak the same language but do not understand each other.

In one of these wanderings I discovered that the headquarters of a Country Womens Association and that of the group work of a state adult education authority occupied the same building, two floors apart. In the gracious Australian tradition, I took morning tea in each headquarters and was amused to find that staff members of each had never taken the tea break together, were surprised at the suggestion such informal meetings might advance the cause of adult education. Precisely because their programs differed in many respects and, where similar, operated at different levels, a mutual discussion at headquarters might

prove of real benefit to the consumer in a distant rural community. The efficiency, dedication and industriousness of each group of leaders and the importance of avoiding duplication where funds are limited is not questioned. It is the broadening of the concept of adult education and the clarifying of the function of each agency in it, especially with a view to mutual assistance in developing leadership and unity in the distant rural community, that is important; increasingly so as local groups are activitated and begin to demand services beyond the resources of the agency that activated them. Australia needs copy no American model. Her Councils of Social Service would be models for councils of educational service, but they should be unofficial, set up for mutual information rather than for the prosecution of any new programs or duties, and not under the tyrannous obligation of regular meetings, quantities of secretarial work and that element of fetishism concerning co-ordination that can be a serious interference with the productive use of time. Americans will notice that this means a modification of the pure humanist philosophy to recognize that, while better adults may make better communities, better communities also may make better adults. The conscious development of better communities may require cooperative planning and a cooperative attitude at both local and state levels. This concept is emergent in Western Australia, but not in the other states except, perhaps, at the University of New England.

The other concept of real use to Australians is that of leadership training. I do not think this should be an added burden on the state boards responsible for providing and administering the programs and services only a small part of which has been described in this paper. Professor Peers, an Englishman who reported on adult education after a visit to Australia, has this to say: "Universities should not regard the existence of State Sponsored

Adult Education Boards in their areas as a reason for abandoning their own direct work in adult education. The Universities are the only bodies ultimately which can foster adult studies at the highest level, and they are also the only bodies in the long run which can ensure objectivity in these studies. For the latter reason, the one hope of reviving workers' education in Australia probably lies with the Universities and... earnest consideration should be given to the best means of meeting it."* I would go beyond Professor Peers in suggesting that this responsibility extends to all socio-economic groups, and that it can best be honored not through the maintenance of separate programs but through the broad training of leaders in the development and operation of their own programs. Such training is not envisaged for adult educators but by adult educators for others who are, in fact, trying to influence adult life. First are professional people in other departments of the bureaucracy whose work is in part concerned with learning situations for adults. Agricultural workers, health workers, social workers, state school teachers who are already trained personnel could extend their influence and, incidentally, enrich their own lives, if given additional part-time training in human relations, the analysis of community problems and the skills of adult education. These are the people to whom the isolated resident tutor, now working in self-created isolation, could turn to build the local adult education corps.

Training programs should be worked out with the department employing these permanent personnel and with the cooperation of the civil service associations and state school teacher unions which have fought for their security and well being. Seminars need not be held on campus and need not necessarily carry credit, and should be built about the empirical problems known to exist. Teaching should be coupled with the minimum necessary

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* Adult Education in Australia: A Report by Professor Robert Peers, Professor of Adult Education at the University of Nottingham. Mimeographed. My copy by courtesy of Colin Badger, Director, Council of Adult Education, Victoria.

research to ensure the objectivity of which Professor Peers speaks, and the gathering of research data, like the defining of problems, is part of the training. It should be extended as soon as possible to nongovernmental workers and to volunteers. Some share in its direction and continuous access to its processes and results should be available to the professional adult educators in central administrative positions. Because the ultimate results of this work can be far more expansive than any other program a university may offer, it is the proper academic function for institutions of higher learning once the state governments, through designated agencies, have accepted the responsibility for administering programs and services.

I do not believe the universities will realize their potential influence on Australian life until research and teaching in adult education accompany services. Speaking of the distinguished extramural work of the University of Sydney to other members of the faculty, Professor Peers "was struck by a certain lack of interest, indeed a feeling almost of opposition" which "seemed to derive from a lack of understanding -- to itself as well as to the State -- of the contribution which the University is making". The academic policy and standards of Australian universities are fixed by professorial boards which are powerful and exclusive. Some members of these boards may have had experience in adult classes; many have not. To the latter, the extension service is just another costly department, one without a field of knowledge, students in formal training, progressively graded course work and a head who "professes" exact, specific knowledge. Whatever the nominal status, salary and personal scholarship of the Director, he is still a "professor without portfolio", to quote Fred Alexander, an administrator rather than a scholar with administrative duties, and has no place on the professorial or academic board. The contribution of adult education

will therefore not be understood until it is translated into scholarship by academic colleagues.

Academic employment of adult educators is just beginning. The University of Melbourne has a senior lecturer in adult education, Dr. T. H. Coates, the only purely academic position of its type in Australia. Research and some teaching are being done but these are mainly concerned with urban activities, and do not include the interdepartmental practical training suggested above. I would expect a similar development in the University of New England as that institution grows, though it is geographically at a disadvantage for training personnel in some of the state departments. The University of Western Australia planned to appoint a Reader in 1956. Though this type of development is most required in the more populous and industrialized East, Western Australia is the state wherein it will first occur if the University chooses to lead. There is a unique opportunity in Perth, for it so happens that other educational organizations in the state and also elements in the social services, agriculture including the cooperative movement, and several vigorous volunteer bodies are groping towards such a development. Prosperity has brought a great vitality to the state and the emergence of much new leadership. It may well be that Western Australia will add another chapter to its distinguished record of experiment in Australian adult education.

- End -

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